

CHAPTER IX: "ONE OF OUR LARGEST, HANDSOMEST POSTS," 1888-1897

A. New Facilities

When Lt. Col. William M. Graham, 1st Artillery, surveyed his command in January 1888 he noted that 37 officers and 448 enlisted men comprised the Presidio garrison. When Col. Evan Miles, 1st Infantry, signed the post returns on December 31, 1897, he counted 37 officers and 881 enlisted men. This large increase in the command accompanied by the Army's efforts at modernization caused many changes in the main post during the 1890s.

The many improvements in the physical plant at the Presidio of San Francisco during the early years of this decade resulted, not so much from the consolidation of regiments nation-wide, as from the presence of the division headquarters offices earlier in the 1880s and from the construction of a massive new system of coastal defenses in the 1890s and beyond. Much of the personnel increase resulted from the assignment of additional artillery units to man the new defenses. They and the cavalry units that protected the national parks comprised the garrison through the early 1890s. In 1896, however, two battalions of the 1st U.S. Infantry, which had concentrated its strength on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, arrived at the Presidio. In December 1897 the three arms – infantry, artillery, and cavalry – at the Presidio had a strength of more than 900 personnel. Great improvements occurred in quarters for officers and enlisted men, the latter moving into a row of large and handsome masonry barracks on Montgomery Street.

In his annual building report for 1888 the post quartermaster noted repairs and additions that had been carried out on the original officers' row west of Funston Avenue. More bay windows had been added – to quarters 12 and 16 (today's numbers). A kitchen-laundry ell had been constructed at quarters 13 and 14. Most of the row had had the interiors painted. The four field officers' quarters east of Funston (56, 57, 58, and 59) each acquired a laundry and servant's quarters ell.

The Presidio continued to experience a shortage of officers' quarters. A letter in November 1888 pointed out that it was the largest artillery garrison in the United States; there were forty-four officers on the post but only thirty sets of quarters.¹

1. J.S. Oyster, *Annual Report of Public Buildings*, May 22, 1888; "Officers' Quarters at the Presidio," November 15, 1888, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.

Washington responded to the Presidio's situation, first by approving the conversion of the schoolhouse (then 19, not extant) next to the chapel to a set of quarters at a cost of \$2,442; and, in 1889, the erection of two sets of field officers' quarters (today 51 and 64) for \$5,100 on the east side of Funston. When completed the former schoolhouse had nine rooms – two sitting rooms, dining room, two bedrooms, kitchen, laundry, servants' room, and bathroom.²

The shortage remained. In 1890 Colonel Langdon reported that the forty officers then at the Presidio (including a division staff officer) had been crowded into thirty-three sets of quarters. Further construction included still another set of field officer's quarters (today 65) on the east side of Funston Avenue in 1893, and the conversion of the former barracks that had formed the northern half of the old Division of the Pacific headquarters offices (then 24) into two sets of quarters for lieutenants.³

The Protestant chapel (today 45) underwent little change at this time. Only fifteen or so officers and their families attended services. A request for a new carpet (112 square yards) was submitted to the War Department. The one hundred or so soldiers who attended the Catholic chapel above the gun shed (then 50) lost that facility when fire destroyed the building in 1895. The post commander turned over the former steam dummy (railroad) depot (then 53) for their use. He said it made a good chapel but was too small.⁴

The ancient adobe at the south end of the parade, now called the Assembly Room and Officers' Mess (then 20, now 50 and occasionally called the "club") was described in 1888 as having four rooms in the adobe portion, a 30 foot by 55 foot assembly room in a wood frame section, and a small wood frame ell

2. J.S. Oyster, November 20, 1893, to Post Adjutant, Register of Letters Received 1893, PSF, RG 393, NA; Officers' Quarters 1889, summary sheets of contracts, PSF, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.

3. Langdon, January 12, 1890, to Department of California; Post Adjutant, October 19, 1897, to Quartermaster, PSF, Letters Sent; J.G. Chandler, March 29, 1893, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received, PSF, 1892-1893, PSF, RG 393, NA; Field Officer's Quarters, War Department Form 117, Historical Records of Buildings, 1905-1935, PSF, U.S. Army Commands, 1920-1942, RG 394, NA.

4. Langdon, July 6, 1889, to War Department, Letters Sent; Graham, October 1, 1895, to Department of California, Register of Letters Received 1895, PSF, RG 393, NA.

to the rear that measured 18 feet by 33 feet and had two rooms. Approval had arrived to add another ell.⁵

In 1888 the Army moved Fort Point's two one story, wood frame barracks, each 30 feet by 120 feet, to the main post placing them immediately to the west of the post hospital, on a north-south axis. The post quartermaster numbered them 97 and 98 and submitted a request to add a water closet and a 1st sergeant's room to each.⁶

By 1890 the enlisted barracks had become overcrowded. An analysis of the situation listed the barracks and the occupants of each:

24. Band barracks – 21 men. (This was the former two story kitchen and mess hall that formed the northwest unit of the division headquarters.)

29. Artillery barracks – 36 men. (Constructed in Civil War.)

30. Artillery barracks – 36 men. (Constructed in Civil War.)

32. Artillery barracks – 36 men. (Constructed in Civil War.)

34. Infantry barracks – 36 men. (Constructed in Civil War.)

37. Cavalry barracks – 56 men. (Constructed in Civil War, later remodeled into two story cavalry barracks. Today 86.)

38. Light Battery, Artillery – 61 men. (Constructed in Civil War, later moved from south to north end of the parade ground.)

72. Cavalry barracks – 57 men. (Constructed in Civil War, later remodeled into two-story

5. J.S. Oyster, August 28 and September 14, 1888, to Post Adjutant; S.B. Holabird, December 13, 1888, to Division of Pacific, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.

6. Post Quartermaster, September 1, 1888, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received 1888; Graham, September 21, 1888, to Department of California, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA.

cavalry barracks. Today 87).

88. Light Battery, Artillery – 56 men. (Constructed 1885. Today 36)

89. Infantry barracks – 56 men. (Constructed ca. 1885.)

97. Artillery barracks – 27 men. (Moved from Fort Point)

98. Artillery barracks – 27 men. (Moved from Fort Point)

Colonel Langdon wrote that considering each man should have 800 cubic feet of air space, the Presidio barracks were overcrowded by about 120 men.⁷

The situation had not improved by the end of 1892. Colonel Graham penned a lengthy letter in which he said the existing barracks could be enlarged by adding a second story where possible, but they would still be old and flimsy. Because of the size and importance of the Presidio and its proximity to a major city and because of the many daily visitors including officers from foreign countries, new barracks should be constructed of modern materials and be ample in size. It took time. A year later the Department of California notified Graham that the Secretary of War had authorized construction of the first of large, double (i.e., two companies) barracks complete with mess facilities.⁸

The chief quartermaster in the Department wrote that he would personally direct the construction and that Mr. Jas. H. Humphreys, a civilian engineer, would have immediate supervision. Before work could begin a ravine running north from the base of Presidio Hill, between the row of wooden barracks and the former laundresses row had to be filled and the laundresses row removed. Once filled in, this new land would serve as company areas for the new row of barracks and eventually a parade ground.⁹

7. Langdon, January 12, 1890, to Department of California, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA; J.S. Oyster, January 6, 1890, to Quartermaster General, in box "Presidio Land," PAM.

8. Graham, December 22, 1892, to T.M. Vincent, Letters Sent; Department of California, December 9, 1893, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received, PSF, RG 393, NA.

9. Chief Quartermaster, California, May 17 and November 16, 1894, and March 20, 1895, to CO, PSF; Adjutant General, California, December 9, 1893, to CO, PSF,

As construction got underway, a scramble began to determine which of the married enlisted men were authorized quarters and, if so, where they could move. A civilian, F. L. Hansen, won the contract for constructing the first double barracks, later numbered 101. Angel Island provided the stone for the foundation. Bricks formed the walls. The building was completed in 1895. A summary sheet of the contracts for that first barracks listed the costs of various undertakings:

Constructing a drain and filling the ravine, 1894	\$1,763 and \$6,238
One two-company barracks	33,900
Gas piping	180
Plumbing	2,275
Lockers	548
Wardrobe lockers	614 ¹⁰

The next two barracks, 102 and 103, reached completion in 1896 and the row was extended by the erection of 104 and 105 in 1897. The post quartermaster ordered screens for the doors and windows. Colonel Graham pointed out the necessity for blinds on the front windows. He fretted that the new Montgomery Street ran too close to the barracks; the companies needed space on which to form for roll calls and inspections – the genesis of a new parade ground between the two rows of barracks. The original lighting plan proved inadequate and the quartermaster drew up a new list of gas lamps required. When barracks 104 and 105 reached completion, someone discovered that the gas piping for the "pendant double lamps" had not been installed. Finally, in 1897, \$230 became available for a concrete sidewalk along Montgomery Street.¹¹

When the troops moved into their new homes, Graham set about finding new uses for the wooden barracks. The post exchange moved into one of them. Officers who had had to maintain offices in their own quarters now found ample room. Space was allotted for courts martial, examining boards, lyceums,

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Register of Letters Received, PSF, RG 393, NA. In 1888 a 2,000-foot tunnel was dug into the hill at the head of this ravine in an attempt to locate water. It proved dry.

10. Chief Quartermaster, Department of California, August 16 and December 18, 1894, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA; Summary sheets of Contracts, PSF, CCF, QMG, RG 92, NA.

11. Post Quartermaster, May 21 and August 24, 1895, to CO, PSF; QMG, July 21, 1897, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; Graham, July 31, 1895 and April 28, 1896, to Department of California, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

recruiting, and battalion commanders. Even the regimental band found a new practice space.¹²

Until the 1890s the entrances at Lombard Street and at First (Arguello) Avenue had been guarded by heavy wooden archways provided with wooden gates. Both had begun to suffer from old age and Colonel Graham thought the time had come to dignify these entrances with gates of iron. The depot quartermaster let contracts for the gates in mid-1895 and by November he had plans readied for stone wing walls at the entrances. When work got underway the quartermaster wished to remove some cannon in the way. Graham said these guns had been emplaced in 1880. At first he thought they had served as guards but the War Department assured him they were for ornamental purposes. At any rate, Graham said they could not be dropped from the records without the authority of the Secretary of War through the Chief of Ordnance. But, he concluded, they could be removed temporarily until the work was completed. The imposing iron gateways were completed early in 1896 at a cost of \$3,900. Work then proceeded on the stone wing walls. Soon, vandals attacked the ornamental gate posts at the Arguello entrance and succeeded in breaking off the last letter in "Essayons" (Let Us Try) on the Engineers' insignia on one of the faces.

Once the entrances had been completed, the depot quartermaster, Lt. Col. J.G.C. Lee, proceeded with the construction of a stone wall along the eastern boundary of the reservation, starting at Lombard Street and extending southward. At the same time correspondence dealt with plans for a similar wall on the southern boundary, from the Central (Presidio) Avenue entrance westward beyond Arguello. The Secretary of War's annual report for 1897 announced that one contract for the walls had been completed, but another one progressed but slowly because of the difficulty in obtaining rock of the required color.

Then there was the entrance on the southern boundary at 7th Avenue. The reservation road at this point crossed over a bridge on the eastern tip of Mountain Lake, along the east side of the lake, and through the U.S. Marine Hospital's reservation to the Presidio. In 1895 the Army erected a sign at the entrance reading "U.S. Military Reservation." In 1897 the Marine Hospital painted over the sign and reworded it "U.S. Marine Hospital Reservation." The Presidio's rage made its way to higher headquarters. Eventually the hospital's sign came down.

12. J. Jones, February 6 and 7, 1896, to Presidio officers; Graham, January 20, 1896, to Department of California, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA.

The Central (Presidio) Avenue entrance became an issue when the Jackson Street Car Company tore up some four blocks of the avenue from Pacific to Sacramento streets. While the area was outside the reservation, Colonel Graham did not appreciate the situation. He wrote the City saying that Central Avenue led to the Presidio's principal carriage entrance (freight wagons used the Lombard entrance) and had been improved to enable citizens to enjoy visits to the reservation. Presumably order was restored and the street again became passable.¹³

Until 1894 little attention had been paid to the sloughs and marshes in the lower Presidio. That year the quartermaster had repairs made to the bridge that crossed the slough on the road leading to the Presidio wharf. At the same time the wharf received extensive repairs because of the rock that would be arriving from Angel Island for the new barracks. Also, an artillery officer asked permission to use a "certain piece of ground in the swamp" for a garden. One of the principal uses of the lower Presidio continued to be the disposal of refuse. The gulls and tides disposed of kitchen refuse, while manure filled holes and ravines.¹⁴

In 1894 the number of cavalry troops at the Presidio doubled from two to four. This increase, added to the horses of the two batteries of light artillery and the quartermaster's animals, greatly overcrowded the stable facilities on the bluff at the north end of the main post. Additional stables had already been added: one set in 1889, probably for a light artillery battery, cost \$3,729; cavalry stables in 1891, cost \$4,483, and a second one for the cavalry in 1894. Nonetheless, the post quartermaster continued to protest against cavalry horses in his stables. He suggested that those horses could be kept in the quartermaster corral on the beach in the lower Presidio. In 1896 the Army prepared an estimate for filling in a portion of the eastern part of the lower presidio for future stables. Despite Colonel Graham's objections to having stables in that area, a contract for fill was let to one John Keeso. At the same time both Alcatraz and Army Engineers were removing sand from the beach.¹⁵

13. Graham, January 10, 1889, to City of San Francisco, and December 22, 1892 and June 10, 1895, to Department of California; E. Miles, June 3, 1897 to U.S. Marine Hospital; Lee, April 22, 1896, and June 1 and 17, 1896, Register of Letters Received, 1896, RG 393, NA; *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1897, p. 367; *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 11, 1895. While construction records for gates at the Presidio and Broadway entrances have not been located, the Presidio building records indicate they acquired new gates at this time. Seventh Avenue is no longer an entrance to the Presidio.

14. J. Miley, July 7, 1894, to CO, PSF; S.B.M. Young, April 26, 1897, to Department of California, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.

15. Summary sheets of contracts, 1889, 1891, and 1896; Construction expenditures, PSF, 1883-1896, CCF, OQMG, RG 92; Post Quartermaster, ca. September 5, 1894, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; Graham, July 31, 1895, to A.L. Robert; March 20,

Lt. Col. Anson Mills prepared a document in 1891 that outlined the Presidio's communications system with the world outside its boundaries. He said that the post office received mail deliveries twice a day, at 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Post headquarters housed a telegraph station. Three means of transit were available: the Union Street cable line connecting with the railway Dummy train direct to the post, the Jackson Street cable line to the border of the reservation, and Steamer *McDowell* that touched at the Presidio wharf three times a day. The dummy cars ran every fifteen minutes and the cable cars between three and eight minutes.¹⁶

During the Civil War the Army had built a masonry magazine (today 95) behind the guardhouse. In 1892, however, Colonel Graham became concerned about its location. He said it had become surrounded by wooden structures. Should a fire occur in one of these buildings it could endanger the magazine with the possible loss of lives. He recommended a new magazine be constructed away from the built-up area. A later building form dating from the 1930s listed a brick magazine measuring 16 feet by 35 feet as having been constructed in 1893. Graham had suggested that a suitable location for the new magazine was in the vicinity of today's intersection of Park and Lincoln boulevards (the formal entrance to Fort Winfield Scott).¹⁷

A multitude of other construction activities crowded the Presidio's calendar in the 1890s. In 1892 the Presidio and Ferries Railroad abandoned the portion of its line that lay within the Presidio reservation and terminated it at the Harbor View Resort. In its place the company constructed a cable railroad that entered the Presidio at Greenwich Street and ran northwestward, terminating just short of the post hospital, 2. The post quartermaster submitted a requisition for material to build a sidewalk to connect the garrison with the terminus of the cable car line. Later the superintendent of the Presidio and Ferries Railroad Company received a request to place a cover over the platform at the terminus of the car line for the protection of

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1896, to Department of California; and September 19, 1896, to CO, Alcatraz, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

16. A. Mills, July 23, 1891, to War Department, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

17. This structure has not been identified on any map. The building form contained a photograph of it along with the notation that it was "supposed" to have been moved to Fort Scott but the Army was unable to move it. Graham, September 12, 1892, to Department of California, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA; War Department QMC Form 117, Historical Records of Buildings, 1905-1935, U.S. Army Commands 1920-1942, Rg 394, NA.

passengers during the rainy season.¹⁸ In 1896 the Presidio began construction on a new rifle range in the southwest corner of the reservation, an area then called Frenchman's Flat. The earthen butts were located toward the west end of the range. Beyond them was a triangle of land outside the reservation, between it and the ocean. Colonel Shafter and his successors recommended that the federal government either purchase or lease that area in order to prohibit wanderers. Otherwise, the Army might be forced to close the range should someone complain of rounds going over the butts and endangering life. The record is silent as to what solutions may have been found.¹⁹

In earlier years the authorities had to contend with illegal pot hunters searching in vain for hidden Spanish treasure on the reserve. In 1896 came a different kind of hunter. John R. Green, San Francisco, requested permission to prospect a rich ledge of "cinnabar or quicksilver" rumored to exist on the Presidio about one mile south of Fort Point (in the vicinity of Rob Hill?). It appears that the idea died a sudden death. It was at this time that Telegraph or Redoubt Hill acquired the name Rob. Colonel Graham wrote A. T. Rodgers, U.S. Coast Survey, asking him to provide the height of the Survey's bench mark "Rob" for the purpose of locating artillery fire control stations for the modern armament being emplaced.²⁰

Maj. W. H. Heuer, Corps of Engineers and the West Coast Lighthouse Engineer, wrote the Presidio asking permission to construct a water catchment for the Light House Service. He had selected a site that lay south of the fort at Fort Point and north of gun emplacement 7 in East Battery. Graham approved providing it did not interfere with any future armament in the area. New construction in 1897 included two brick storehouses, one for quartermaster supplies and one for commissary. These buildings, today's 223 and 237, lined Halleck Street. In the same area a bakery having two ovens (229) was constructed at that time at a cost of \$4,200.²¹

18. Post quartermaster, November 29, 1892, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; E. Miles, September 27, 1897, to I.F. Kydd, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

19. Shafter, December 12, 1896, to Department of California, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

20. J.R. Green, October 8, 1896, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; Graham, July 7, 1896, to A.T. Rodgers, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

21. W.H. Heuer, February 28, 1895, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA; Summary sheets of contracts 1897, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.

Two other structures built in the 1890s are today's 201 and 204. They were among the earliest substantial structures to be built in the lower Presidio. While contemporary correspondence concerning them is lacking, the earliest surviving building records described 201 as first being a forage storehouse completed in 1897. Later it became part of the post exchange. The earliest records described its neighbor, 204, as having been completed in 1896 as a storeroom. Later it too became part of the post exchange. In 1990 it housed the Presidio Thrift Shop.²²

The post quartermaster touched on an interesting note in 1897 when he said that the only paved gutters were those along Montgomery Street in front of the new brick barracks, along the new road from the Arguello entrance westward to the water pumping station, and along another new road near the national cemetery. He recommended that all gutters be paved along all the main drives of the main post and the vicinity.²³

B. Sutlers and Canteens

After the War of 1812 the Army authorized sutlers, or traders, to sell supplies that were not government issue items on army posts. The Secretary of War appointed these persons who had a monopoly on the post, a council of administration determining their prices. Also, the sutler paid a portion of his profits into the post fund. Among the goods offered, alcoholic beverages were freely available in the early days. At the Presidio, the sale of alcohol was part of an effort to discourage soldiers from patronizing neighboring bars. As time passed, the emphasis was on beer and wine rather than hard liquor.

At least since the late 1860s, Angelo Beretta served as the Presidio's popular post trader. He operated an excellent establishment of twelve rooms in his building west of the Civil War barracks. His large family lived nearby. In 1885 the Army approved Beretta's plans for a handsome new residence that he built on the south end of and in line with the married men's quarters. In 1888 the Army ordered him to remove his sign that advertised the sale of beer, wine, and other liquors and replace it with "Angelo Beretta Post Trader." A year later the Presidio received word that the post tradership might be abolished and that

22. A Presidential order in 1895 established the post exchange (PX) system, a cooperative store to sell goods not issued by the government. Weigley, *History of United States Army*, p. 270.

23. Post Quartermaster, May 7, 1897, to Post Adjutant, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.

army-operated canteens would be established. The Army's adjutant general asked for comment on the proposal. The Presidio's Council of Administration replied that Beretta should remain:

There had been no complaints against him.
He had invested large sums of money in his store and residence.
The store had provided a resting place for visitors to the Presidio.
He had served the post well over a long period of time.²⁴

The Secretary of War decided in 1889 to abolish the post traders and to proceed with canteens. When pressure was applied to Beretta to cease selling alcoholic beverages in December, he replied that he had stopped serving hard liquor and requested permission to sell beer and wine until the canteen opened. The ax fell on January 20, 1890, when the Army revoked his license. Beretta quickly asked the Army to purchase his buildings. Colonel Langdon reviewed the situation. Since there would not be an incoming trader to whom Beretta could sell and since the Army was under no obligation to buy the buildings, Beretta faced a considerable loss. Langdon did think the residence could be readily adapted to an officer's quarters and \$1,200 could turn the store into a much needed storeroom.²⁵

A board of officers took up the subject agreeing with Langdon that the Army could use both buildings, the store being suitable to replacing the Presidio's small canteen already in operation. It placed the value of the buildings at \$5,000. The Secretary of War approved the purchase "when funds are available." Beretta continued to operate his business until the matter was settled. Alas, he also continued to sell alcoholic beverages. In July 1890 he received an order to close the store. Matters still pending, he asked permission to allow the temporary use of one room for meetings of the George Sykes Post of the Grand Army of the Republic. He acquired approval along with a warning not to sell liquor or anything else.²⁶

In June 1892 Washington announced the purchase of Beretta's buildings for \$3,000 (residence \$2,500, store \$500). The store became the canteen and the residence was converted into a duplex for noncommissioned officers.

24. Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 177; H. Harris, October 2, 1888, to Beretta, Letters Sent; Proceedings of the Post Council of Administration, February 18, 1889, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.

25. Beretta, December 11, 1889, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; Langdon, February 4, 1890, to War Department, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

26. Adjutant General, April 15, 1890, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA; CO, PSF, July 14, 1890; Beretta, April 21, 1891, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; E. Hunter, July 16, 1890; Graham, January 10, 1891, to Adjutant General; Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

A committee of noncommissioned officers offered a few suggestions for the operation of the canteen, such as a separate room for NCOs, and that privates, then earning \$13 a month, be limited to a credit allowance of \$2. Later, when the term "canteen" changed to "post exchange" the committee offered more suggestions:

1. The beer then sold was inferior and should be changed to either Milwaukee or St. Louis.
2. Present system of drawing beer was unsanitary.
3. There should be free fresh vegetables at the lunch counter.
4. Crackers should be kept on the lunch counter in the bar room. The Post Exchange Council approved 1 and 2, disapproved 4, and changed 3 to read potatoes.

When the time came to plan the construction of the new brick barracks in 1894, it became necessary to relocate the former sutler's residence. It was moved to the west, to a site behind the brick barracks 101 and eventually given the number 116. The old store continued to serve as a canteen post exchange although far from satisfactory being "miserable and unclean." In 1894 the exchange officer reported that the men preferred San Francisco's Buffalo Beer, especially a brew named Columbacher. Colonel Graham, prodded by an inspector general, directed that the building's interior be made more attractive. Then disaster. At two a.m., June 24, 1895, fire destroyed the greater part of the building including billiard tables and furniture.²⁷

C. Fort Point

In 1891 the Corps of Engineers began a construction program on the Presidio headlands that resulted in the modernization of the coastal defenses of San Francisco Bay. While the masonry fort at Fort Point continued to mount guns, its obsolescence became all the more apparent. The post-Civil War

27. Department of California, June 26, 1891, to CO, PSF; Graham, February 7, 1894, to Department of California; M.F. Davis, October 20 and November 9, 1894, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received; Graham, April 15, 1891, January 11, 1892, January 15, 1894, and January 15, 1895, to War Department, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.

East Battery also retained some older-model guns, but West Battery was almost wholly obliterated by the new works. The Civil War quartermaster buildings at Fort Point continued to serve but also to deteriorate. The Army had moved three of the more substantial buildings – the two barracks and a storehouse – to the main post at the Presidio.²⁸

The families of married enlisted men continued to live in the gorge quarters of the fort for a time. A newspaper reporter called Fort Point the most desolate place on the peninsula and these quarters "dark, damp, and dismal." The third tier of the casemates no longer had guns mounted and the laundresses used it for drying clothes. By 1893, however, these families had moved out of the old fort. Still, tourists visited the point on Sundays and still the Presidio's artillerymen provided guard details and fired salutes when dignitaries visited San Francisco. The Engineer in charge of construction, Col. George Mendell, reported that all the engineer buildings had grown old and were in bad condition. One of his junior officers lived, at least temporarily, in one of the officers' quarters on the bluff.²⁹

In contrast to Mendell's observation on the engineer buildings, a lieutenant reported in 1893, "The houses near the dock, viz the blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, mortar-shed, lime-house, store-house, and drying shed are in fairly good condition." Not so the married men's quarters at the post. One of the Presidio's surgeons inspected "the settlement known as Fort Point" in 1894. He said that the buildings were damp, dirty, and crowded, and many women and children were sick. This report stimulated more inspections. In 1896 the department's staff quartermaster recommended that all the non-engineer buildings be destroyed, except one set of officers' quarters (De Russey's?). He said eight of the buildings containing forty-two rooms housed eleven privates, two corporals, and one sergeant. Also, a soldier's widow, Mrs. Conglan, occupied a room. None of these people was authorized rooms. An ordnance sergeant and a civilian forage master occupied another building of sixteen rooms. Only this sergeant, in charge of the old fort, was entitled to furnished quarters.³⁰

28. The two barracks were moved in 1888, and the storehouse at some date before 1896. At the main post this building was called the quartermaster and subsistence storehouse and dispensary. It may have been Fort Point's two-story building 4, the commissary storehouse. Its new location is unknown.

29. Mendell, reports of inspection, January and July 1890; H.C. Newcomer, January 8, 1892, to Mendell; G.H. Burton, February 5, 1892, to War Department, General Correspondence 1890-1892, OCE, RG 77, NA; Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 323-24.

30. C.A.F. Flager, January 19, 1893, to Mendell, General Correspondence 1893-1894, OCE, RG 77; C.E.B. Flagg, March 7, 1894, to CO, PSF; Chief Quartermaster, Department of California, July 10, 1896, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.

Colonel Graham objected strongly to the removal of the buildings saying they were required for public use (the married men were mostly from this regiment). The future would see many changes at Fort Point, especially as the Engineers' work intensified. But later maps of the area indicated that at least the four sets of laundresses' buildings, originally the mess halls and kitchens, remained for a time.³¹

D. Tidying the Boundaries

In 1892 Colonel Graham penned a description of the Presidio. Among the details a notation recorded that a small piece of land had been taken from the Presidio for the Rancho Ojo de Agua de Figueroa claim. The story began before the acquisition of California when Apolinario Miranda petitioned for a lot of land one hundred varas (about 100 yards) square in 1833. After the Presidio's boundaries had been established, Miranda's heirs appeared before the U.S. Board of Land Commissioners in 1854 laying claim to the land that extended into the east boundary of the reservation. The case wound its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the claimants in 1864. Yet the dispute lingered. Finally, in 1875 the U.S. Land Office informed the Army Engineer Department that despite the Army's surveys of the east boundary, the land claim was valid and that particular area was indeed outside the Presidio's boundaries. Not until a map of the Presidio prepared by Maj. William Harts in 1907 did that small indentation on the eastern boundary in the vicinity of Green Street appear on military maps of the reservation.³²

The southern boundary of the Presidio made the news again in 1892 when the same claimants who had been denied their claims years earlier appealed to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors for a solution to the case saying that since the earlier decision they had continued to pay the city taxes on the claims, an amount now reaching \$50,000. A citizen who opposed this new issue said that the claimants had continued to pay taxes in the hope that the U.S. Congress would finally recognize their claim of title. The

31. Graham, July 8, 1896, to Department of California, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.

32. To a casual stroller on Lyon Street today, the value of that slice of real estate is apparent by the elegant homes in the niche. Graham, November 5, 1892, to Department of California, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA; S.D. Burdett, April 22, 1875, to U.S. Surveyor General, San Francisco, Land Papers, OCE, RG 77, NA; Land Office, April 24, 1875, to Engineer Department, Bulky File, RG 77; J.E. Runcie, February 6, 1889, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.

supervisors refused to take any action in the matter, and that was that.³³

For fifty years the State of California had laid claim to the tidal lands on the Presidio's water boundaries. For fifty years the Army had acted as if the marshes and sloughs of the lower Presidio were part of the reservation. The construction of the modern coastal defense in the 1890s, including batteries overlooking San Francisco Bay, may have been the catalyst to a solution. At any rate, in March 1897 the State of California enacted legislation that gave the United States title to the lands extending from high-water mark out to 300 yards below low-water mark for any military or naval purpose or for defense. It had taken time and energy, but now the city, state, and federal government agreed on the area known as the Presidio of San Francisco.³⁴

E. The Presidio Golf Course

The Scots originated the game of golf in the waning decades of the European Middle Ages, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. King James IV of Scotland enjoyed the game early in the sixteenth century. Not long thereafter his granddaughter, Mary Queen of Scots, introduced golf to the French court. The British, through their empire, introduced the game first to India, then to Canada where the inhabitants formed the Royal Montreal Golf Club in 1873. Fifteen years later, in 1888, Americans established their first formal club at Yonkers, New York, calling it the Saint Andrews Golf Club. It had six holes. The game quickly spread and in 1893 the Chicago Golf Club constructed the first 18-hole course.³⁵

Organized golf came to California in 1893 when the Burlingame Country Club came into existence. Two years later a group of San Franciscans created the San Francisco Golf and Country Club and with the permission of the Presidio's commanding officer, Col. William M. Graham, constructed (if that is the right word) a 9-hole course on a sandy plateau on the reservation near its southern boundary and between

33. *Daily Alta California*, March 1 and 15, 1891.

34. An Act relinquishing to the United States of America the title of this State to certain lands, March 9, 1897, Fortifications File, OCE, RG 77, NA.

35. [John G. Levison], *A Short History of the Presidio Golf Club*, July 1964, p. 1; Funk & Wagnalls, *New Encyclopedia* (1990). American colonists probably played an informal form of golf.

the Marine Hospital and present Arguello Boulevard.³⁶

The records contain only a little information concerning the early years of the golf course. Until the Spanish-American War the Army made little use of the southern portion of the Presidio, preferring to carry out military drills on the plateau of fairly level ground east of the main post. With the construction of Letterman General Hospital and camps for volunteers heading for the Philippines in that area between 1898 and 1902, less and less space remained for drills. The Army turned to the area of the golf course for use as a drill field even though the steep climb from the main post put a burden on the light artillery particularly.

Col. Jacob B. Rawles, commanding the Presidio in 1902, described the golf links. He said that the area had formerly been a barren of deep sand without a blade of grass. The golf club had managed to smooth the terrain and with ample applications of fertilizer had introduced grass. Many of his officers and their ladies enjoyed the "healthful and exhilarating game." He had held reviews of the Infantry troops on the space but had hesitated to use the area for cavalry or artillery drills as they would quickly cut through the sod.³⁷

A few other items concerning the early club have survived. In 1899 the post commander directed a gatekeeper to allow the club's wagons on the reserve. A formal review held on the course in 1902 caused an order to be issued regulating citizens' carriages, "the portion of the course to be occupied by the troops will be kept clear of visitors." When President Theodore Roosevelt visited San Francisco in 1903, the Presidio went all out, ignoring any damage to the sod. Two troops of cavalry acted as the President's permanent escort throughout his visit. (They left for summer duty in the National Parks immediately thereafter.) On May 13 Roosevelt reviewed the command (more than 1,200 troops) on the Presidio Golf Links. Construction of modern coastal gun batteries at the Presidio progressed steadily during these years and in 1903 the Engineers constructed Battery Chamberlin (6-inch guns) in southwest Presidio. Lincoln Boulevard had not yet been built in that portion of the reserve, and the contractors ran their wagons across the golf course making a thoroughfare of deep ruts. Finally, the Engineers ordered them to stop

36. Levison, *Presidio Golf Club*, p. 1. Colonel Graham fought against tree planting in the southern portion of the reserve, but seemed to have no bias against golf courses.

37. J.B. Rawles, March 25, 1902, to Department of California, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA.

using that route or any other where there were no roads.

Col. Charles Morris, Artillery Corps, became commanding officer of the Presidio in October 1903. Unlike Rawles, Morris had no hesitation about the cavalry and artillery using the golf course whenever necessary. General Orders 1, January 11, 1904, announced the inspection and pass in review of all Presidio troops on the golf links on both January 15 and 20. Possibly responding to criticism, he wrote higher headquarters in the spring that he frequently used the course for tactical requirements without restrictions when he needed to for any military purpose whatever. In a letter to the secretary of the San Francisco Golf Club he explained that he regretted ordering the razing of bunkers on the course, but such was necessary for military reasons (a review on the following day). Inspections and reviews on the golf course continued during the remainder of the time the San Francisco Club continued to use the area, possibly contributing to its decision to move in 1905.³⁸

The San Francisco Golf Club departed on August 1, 1905, for greener fields farther south where it established an eighteen-hole course. Even before that club departed, officials in San Francisco's insurance industry, on June 28, 1905, formed a new golfing organization they called the Presidio Golf Club. The first roll call counted thirty-one charter members. Antoine Borel had just purchased the clubhouse of the San Francisco group that stood just outside the Presidio, and the new club rented the small building from him at \$25 per month. The first president of the new club, Bernard Faymonville, held a position in the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. Colonel Morris, still in command, seems not to have as much to say about the presence of the new club nor did his commander, Maj. Gen. Samuel S. Sumner, Pacific Division, who was soon to retire. As before, there was no formal signing of documents. The club continued to manage the course from across the road, and army officers were free to use the facilities of the clubhouse.

As Morris found it more and more difficult to hold drills in the area of the main post, he relied increasingly on the golf course for reviews and major inspections. He wrote President Faymonville in 1906 that the new club would enjoy the same privileges as the old one had but the club would experience

38. F. Harris, April 27, 1899, to Gatekeeper, 1st Avenue Gate; E. Millar, September 29, 1902; A. Todd, September 27, 1903, to District Engineer; Morris, April 12, 1904, to Department of California; Bergen, June 3, 1904, to B.R. Camp, Letters Sent; District Engineer, September 29, 1903, to CO, PSF, Register of Letters Received 1903; PSF, General Orders 1904-1905; Post Orders 1904-1905, all in PSF, RG 393, NA; PSF, Post Returns, May 1903.

disappointment and discouragement resulting from military use of the links.

The former club had arranged to have an opening made in the masonry wall on the south boundary for entry to the course. Morris said the new club could continue to use this opening if it promised to close it with similar one when it departed (the entry remains in 1994).

Apparently an inspector general in 1905 had questioned why a golf course existed on a military reserve. Morris penned a lengthy response saying that while he did not particularly like holding drills on the site, there simply was not room for the artillery and cavalry to drill elsewhere on the reserve. He did not wish to cause the wanton destruction of the course. Rather, his officers had enjoyed pleasurable and healthful exercise on the links for years. Unless he received orders to the contrary he would continue to preserve the integrity of the links, but not so as to interfere with military formations, drills, and exercises. He said that the former San Francisco Club had spent up to \$20,000 in the care and preservation of the links. It had kept the grass cut short making the area free from fires and suitable for reviews.³⁹

Following the infamous earthquake of 1906, the Presidio Golf Club gave serious consideration to disbanding, all the members' energies being consumed by the immense insurance situation. In January 1907 Engineer Maj. William Harts referred to the area as "the portion formerly used as golf links."⁴⁰

Immediately after the quake the Army established four camps on the Presidio reservation for refugees from the city. It placed one of these camps on the golf course, adjacent to the southern boundary. Harts, in his plans for the future, set aside the area containing the golf course for a large mobilization camp should a national emergency arise.⁴¹

Eventually, however, the Presidio Golf Club renewed its activities. Concerning those early years one learns that caddie fees amounted to 25 cents for the nine holes; green fees came to 50 cents a day or \$2.50

39. Morris, June 3, 1905, to Department of California, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA.

40. Harts, "Report Upon the Expansion . . . of the Presidio," January 1907, General Correspondence 1890-1914, OQMG, RG 92, NA. Harts wrote, "This area is occasionally used now for artillery drills and reviews."

41. General Orders 29, May 13, 1906, PSF, and map indicating the four refugee camps, Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association.

for two weeks; and dues were a hefty \$10 per month. One could order a drink in the clubhouse for 15 cents, or a dozen donuts for 10 cents.

The course contained four grass-covered greens and five sand greens (sand traps galore). Dirt and oil mixed together formed the tees. The only areas watered were the four grass greens. The rest of the course displayed California gold for most of the year. Par stood at or about 68.⁴²

The Presidio Golf Club undertook a major expansion in 1910 when it enlarged the course to eighteen holes. In 1921 it took another major step and hired a firm of British golf architects to improve and lengthen the course. During all these years the informal agreement continued whereby both the members of the club and the military officers enjoyed the ambiance of both the clubhouse and the greens. As far as the scant records reveal both got along extremely well. The civilians bore the cost of the golf course, despite its being on a military reservation, and of the clubhouse across the way. Officers paid dues to the club and received the privileges of the clubhouse. This happy, if unusual, arrangement continued until 1912.⁴³

On July 26, 1912, the Presidio commander, Col. Cornelius Gardner, received a War Department letter that ordered him not to use the Presidio for a golf course. Reacting quickly, the club recruited Franklin K. Lane, soon to be the Secretary of the Interior, and Congressman Julius Kahn to argue its cause. Kahn informed the club in August that the War Department had permitted continuation of the course to February 1, 1913.⁴⁴

What exactly happened on that date has not been determined. Apparently the Secretary of War directed that the privileges that had been granted to the Presidio Golf Club be rescinded. Maj. Gen. Arthur Murray, commanding the Western Department, received authority to use the golf course for officers, their families, friends, and former members of the Presidio Golf Club. Murray was to delegate to Colonel

42. Levison, *Presidio Golf Course*, pp. 1-6; Burgen, June 3, 1904, to B.R. Camp, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA. Back in 1898 the San Francisco Golf Club had asked permission to connect a water pipe with the Spring Valley Water Works' main on 1st Avenue (Arguello).

43. Levison, *Presidio Golf Club*, pp. 5-6; Pamphlet, by the Presidio Golf Club and the United Services Golf Club, 1957, 2 pages. Hereafter cited as Pamphlet.

44. Levison, *Presidio Golf Club*, p. 8.

Gardner control and operation of the course. Despite the mystery of the meaning of "former," the Presidio Golf Club learned that, in fact, it could use the course so long as there was no interference with the Army. It seems nothing had changed.

Things happened in other ways. In March 1913 Army officers formed the United Service Golf Club (all armed forces officers) and presumably assumed responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the course. In fact, an arrangement was reached in which the Presidio Golf Club continued to collect all dues and its members received certificates stating they were the "invited" members of the United Service Golf Club. While on the surface the Army now had control, affairs continued as they had. Then, in 1925, an inspector general uncovered the situation and again the Secretary of War directed the Army to regain control. He authorized the Presidio commander to operate the golf course, to organize a club, and to permit such civilian membership as he deemed appropriate. Lt. Gen. Robert N. Young, Sixth U.S. Army, on reviewing the documents in 1956 wrote, "So far as I can tell, this directive has never been complied with. The civilian membership feel that they have a vested right to the golf course even though it is on a military reservation."

And so affairs continued. The key committee for managing the course, the Greens Committee, added a couple of army officers to its roster. During World War I the United Service Golf Club faded to near obscurity while the Presidio Golf Club continued to collect and disburse funds. On one occasion the Presidio commander volunteered the services of army tanks to help contour the 12th hole. The club employed a firm of British golf course architects to improve and lengthen the course in September 1921. In the 1930s when the Works Progress Administration established a tree nursery on the Presidio, 15,000 of the saplings managed to find their way to the golf course. And so it went through two world wars.⁴⁵

General Young found himself in an embarrassing situation in 1955 when the golf course greenkeepers went on strike - a picket line on a military reservation! But Young soon found a way out of the golf course issues. The course had long been in need of a new automatic watering system. The Presidio Golf Club, aware of this need, realized that it could not afford such a major expense. The club approached General Young asking for welfare funds for the project. The general replied ruefully that he could not use

45. R.N. Young, January 20, 1956, to Comptroller of the Army, PSF Lands, RG 338, NA-Pacific Sierra Region; Pamphlet; Levison, *Presidio Golf Club* pp. 6 and 8-10. The British architects may have removed trenches reported to have been dug on the course during the war for training in trench warfare.

welfare funds because the Army did not control the operation. After due deliberation the Presidio Golf Club agreed that the Army should take over the operation of the course and that the civilian club would continue to manage the clubhouse. The United Service Golf Club members would have all the privileges of the clubhouse, and the members of the Presidio Golf Club would assist in the management of the course. General Young must have sighed with relief as he approved the arrangements.⁴⁶

The United Service Golf Club, organized as an army "sundry fund" activity, managed the course from 1956 on. Its membership was comprised of active and retired officers of the Armed Forces living or stationed within thirty miles of the Presidio. Its Board of Governors promulgated the rules and regulations for the course. The Board consisted of a minimum of seven active duty officers elected semi-annually. The commanding officer of the Presidio garrison received the Board's decisions and enforced the policies of the Sixth U.S. Army commander. In 1955 the combined membership of the two clubs had amounted to 810. By 1964 overall membership came to 1,200, a size that some considered to be almost unmanageable. In 1962, the army club changed its name to the Presidio Army Golf Club.⁴⁷

In more recent times the Army has removed or demolished some of the temporary structures that were erected on the golf course over the years. One building, T-309, sometimes called the Caddie House and at other times the Golf Club House, was demolished in 1983. The California State Historic Preservation Officer made a determination of effect and concluded that it was an attractive nuisance that attracted vandalism. Also, it had been damaged by fire some time earlier and had been left unrepaired. Earlier, structures 306 and 467 had been removed. In 1993 the National Park Service determined that a small cluster of temporary structures in the southeast corner of the course were non-historic: 300 shop, 302 storage shed (a Quonset hut), 303 maintenance and storage, and 347 administration (also called a clubhouse). As of 1991 the Army planned to construct a proper clubhouse at this site with non-appropriated funds. That plan has not materialized.

In 1964 the Army discovered that the golf course had never been added to the Presidio's list of real property. The omission was quickly corrected: Item 71, June 30, 1964 – Golf Course, 18 holes, 149.6

46. Young, January 20, 1956, to Comptroller of the Army; Pamphlet; Levison, *Presidio Golf Club*, p. 10.

47. Pamphlet; Levison, *Presidio Golf Club*, pp. 10-16.

acres, built 1905 (sic), "Found on Post."⁴⁸

In 1985 funding and management of the golf course once again became matters for considerable discussion. The Army had introduced the "One Fund" concept for the various non-mission activities and facilities, such as the golf course, found throughout the system. The president of the Presidio Army Golf Club, Col. Michael J. Berry, requested that the golf course be exempted from this concept because of the unique relationship between the two clubs. The Presidio supported this request pointing out that the clubhouse including the pro shop was civilian owned and operated and stood on non-federal property. The golf course and its support activities were located on federal property. The privileges of these facilities extended to both clubs by an agreement of long standing.

The endorsement concluded, "This is already a potentially volatile subject and correspondence regarding a civilian attempt to gain control of the golf links recently reached the Office of the Secretary of Defense." Department of the Army civilian employees at the Presidio had not been allowed to join the army club because of the overcrowded conditions. If the golf course became part of the One Fund concept, these civilians would have to be admitted. Such action, in turn, would cause the Presidio Golf Club to mount an offensive. Certain members of that club had for years been trying to get control of the course. If they did they would allow active military to play but prohibit retired military.

Meanwhile, Allan LeFevre, a member of the Presidio Golf Club, had written the Secretary of Defense (and fellow Californian) Caspar Weinberger. LeFevre sent a proposal called the "San Francisco Presidio Disaster Refuge" that would make the golf course a much needed refuge in time of disaster and the Presidio Golf Club was suited to manage it because the facilities were originally conceived, constructed, and completed by the club, a civilian organization, under a license from the Secretary of War in 1890 (?), and has been an enduring entity. The facilities have been continuously maintained and operated by the Presidio Golf Club and the Army.

The Presidio commanding officer countered that Public Law 92-589, 1972, that established the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, stated that "the Act preserves for public use, the Act provides for maintenance of needed recreational open space . . . the Act designates the Secretary of the Interior to

48. PSF, Voucher Files, Fiscal Years 1963-1964, 1976, and 1984, Master Plans Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, PSF.

manage resources and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and character of the area." Also, in the event of a national emergency the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can order federal assistance, not from private sources. Predesignations of refuge areas were not normal considerations, "To predesignate a military golf course for such purpose, giving control to a civilian (private) entity appears unwise and loses the flexibility of military use for other higher priority military purposes."

Secretary Weinberger wrote LeFevre on April 29, 1985, "Dear Allen," "Your offer to establish an Emergency Disaster Refuge is appreciated. The Army has and will respond to emergencies. Thus, this particular resource is premature."⁴⁹

The agreement between the Defense and Interior departments in 1993 called for the Sixth U.S. Army headquarters remaining at the Presidio for a period of time and retaining control of the golf course. then came the announcement in 1994 that the Sixth U.S. Army would be disestablished on or before September 30, 1995. The Presidio golf course would begin a new role at that time, a part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

In 1995 the venerable Presidio Golf Course reached the century mark. First established in 1895 it was the second golf links laid out in northern California and among the earliest courses in the United States. It had a unique beginning and history that involved a civilian club, an army club, and an ancient and historic military reservation in its development and operations. Beginning as a nine-hole course, becoming an eighteen-hole course in 1910, the Presidio Golf Course is truly of national significance in the history of outdoor recreation as well as in nineteenth and twentieth century military history. Here civil and military dignitaries, including Presidents of the United States, reviewed the condition of the nation's soldiers. Here the generations have enjoyed the ancient and honorable game, golf.

Back in 1874 Maj. Gen. John Schofield had recommended to Congress that the Army retain all of the Presidio reservation, "because in the event of war all of it would be required for military purposes." In

49. M.J. Barry, May 10, 1985, to CO, FORCOM; C.J. Rittman, n.d., to FORCOM; Allen LeFevre, November 30, 1984, to C. Weinberger; E.D. Hawkins, February 6, 1985, to CO, Sixth Army; Secretary of Defense, April 29, 1985, to LeFevre, all in Presidio of San Francisco, Cabinet L-1, Master Plans Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, PSF.

1898 that requirement became a reality when the United States and Spain went to war against each other.